

Remarks

Applicants appreciate the Examiner's acknowledgement that their submission filed June 26, 2008, has been entered and that the claims submitted therein read upon the elected Group and species. Applicants further appreciate that the species in previously submitted claim 77 and the species of HLA-B*0702 recited in previously submitted claim 79 were also being examined.

Applicants note the Examiner's comment that references "NPL 67", "NPL 43", "NPL 35" and "AF" were not considered because those references were either incomplete or missing. Applicants hereby resubmit clean copies of those references along with the Forms 1449 previously submitted, for the Examiner's review and consideration. Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner review these references and initial the Forms 1449.

Applicants thank the Examiner for withdrawal of the rejections of claims 5 and 8 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, withdrawal of the 102(b) rejections of record in the prior Office Action, and withdrawal of the 103(a) rejections of record in the prior Office Action of claims 6-7, 13, 17-19 in view of Applicant's response filed June 26, 2008.

I. Status of the Claims

Applicants have made certain amendments to the claims to address the Examiner's arguments. Upon the entry of the foregoing amendment, claims 68-69, 72, and 74-86 are pending in the application, with claim 68 being the independent claim. Claims 68, 72, 74, 81, and 82 are herein amended. Claims 70-71 and 73 have been cancelled. These amendments have been made to simplify and clarify the claim

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language. A new claim 86 has been added. These changes are believed to introduce no new matter, and their entry is respectfully requested.

Based on the above amendments and the following remarks, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider all outstanding objections and rejections and that they be withdrawn.

Reconsideration of this Application is respectfully requested.

II. Objections to the Claims

The Examiner has objected to claim 72 because "[c]laim 72 contains a spelling error, i.e., 'an' avidin or streptavidin". Office Action at page 8. Applicants have now deleted "an avidin or streptavidin" and replaced it with "bovine serum albumin" in the amended claim 72. Therefore, Applicants respectfully request that this objection be withdrawn.

III. Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 112, First Paragraph

Claims 70-73 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph, as failing to comply with the written description requirement. The Examiner has characterized this as a *new matter rejection*. Regarding claim 70, the Examiner asserts that "only an indirect connection of the monomer to the first binding ligand is supported by the originally filed disclosure". Office Action at page 3. Regarding claim 71, the Examiner states the originally filed disclosure only supports attachment of the C-terminal end of the monomer to the second binding ligand. Applicants respectfully disagree. However, solely in an effort to advance prosecution, Applicants have cancelled claims 70-71 and 73.

Applicants point out that support for instant claims 68 and 72 as amended herein can be found at paragraphs [0086], [0103], [0116], and [0127]-[0130] of the instant application and paragraph [0078] of the parent application, US 2004/0072262. The specifications of the instant application at paragraph [0086] and the parent application at paragraph [0078] clearly teach that "[t]he MHC monomer can be attached to the solid surface by any suitable means known in the art. For example, the MHC monomer can be immobilized to a surface either *directly or indirectly*, e.g., via an anchoring or connecting entity". Paragraphs [0103] and [0127]-[0128] teach a connecting entity attached to a solid surface, for example BSA-Biotin-Avidin coated plates. Paragraphs [0116] and [0129]-[0130] teach attachment of biotinylated monomers to a connecting entity attached to a solid surface, for example BSA-Biotin-Avidin coated plates.

In view of the foregoing, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw the new matter rejections.

On page 4 of the Office Action, the Examiner further states that "[f]or the purpose of prior art rejections, the filing date of the instant claims 70-73 is deemed to be the filing date of the instant application, i.e., 10/10/03, as the parent application does not support the claimed limitations of the instant application . . .". Applicants respectfully disagree with the Examiner's contention. Claims 70-71 and 73 have been cancelled. Support for claim 72 as amended can be found at paragraphs [0078], [0092], and [0115]-[0116] of the parent application, US 2004/0072262. Thus, Applicants assert that the claim 72 as amended properly claims benefit of priority to the parent application, US 2004/0072262.

IV. Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 112, Second Paragraph

Claims 81 and 82 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, for being indefinite. In particular, the Examiner alleges that the recitation of "wherein said monomer incorporates a MHC-binding peptide in solution" in claim 81 was not clear. Claim 81 is amended to recite "said monomer is bound to a MHC-binding peptide". Support for this amendment is found at paragraph [0093] of the instant application. Applicants submit that, in view of this amendment, the objection is rendered moot.

The Examiner further states that the recitation of "wherein said monomer is recognized by a monoclonal antibody" in claim 82 was not clear. Office Action at page 4. Applicants have considered the Examiner's objection and have amended the claim accordingly to read ". . . a monoclonal antibody that specifically binds to an epitope present in the chimeric MHC class I monomer bound to a MHC-binding peptide". Support for this amendment is found at paragraph [0089] of the instant application. Applicants submit that, in view of this amendment, the objection is rendered moot.

V. Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 103

The Examiner rejected claims 68-78 and 80-85 over WO 01/90747 A2 in view of Alexander *et al. J. Immunol.*, 1997, 159: 4753-4761 (hereinafter, "Alexander"); claims 68-77 and 80-84 over US 5,635,363 (hereinafter, "the '363 patent") in view of Alexander; and claims 78, 79 and 85 over the '363 patent in view of Alexander, and further in view of US 4,208,479 (hereinafter, "the '479 patent"). Applicants respectfully traverse these rejections.

In proceedings before the Patent and Trademark Office, the Examiner bears the burden of establishing a *prima facie* case of obviousness based upon the prior art. *See In*

re Piasecki, 745 F.2d 1468, 1471-73 (Fed. Cir. 1984). As set forth in *Graham v. John Deere Co. of Kansas City*,

[u]nder § 103, the scope and content of the prior art are to be determined; differences between the prior art and the claims at issue are to be ascertained; and the level of ordinary skill in the pertinent art resolved. Against this background the obviousness or nonobviousness of the subject matter is determined.

383 U.S. 1, 17 (1966).

In addition, the Examiner must show reasons, explicit or otherwise, that would compel one of ordinary skill in the art to combine the references in order to make and use the claimed invention. To determine whether there is "an apparent reason to combine" the known elements in the way an application claims,

it will be necessary. . . to look to interrelated teachings of multiple patents; the effects of demands known to the design community or present in the marketplace; and the background knowledge possessed by a person having ordinary skill in the art. . . . To facilitate review, this analysis should be made explicit.

Id. at 14; *see also* Memorandum from the United States Patent and Trademark Office, "Supreme Court decision on *KSR Int'l. Co. v. Teleflex, Inc.*," (May 3, 2007) ("The Court did not totally reject the use of 'teaching, suggestion, motivation' as a factor in the obviousness analysis. . . . [I]n formulating a rejection . . . based upon a combination of prior art elements, it remains necessary to identify the reason why a person of ordinary skill in the art would have combined the prior art elements in the manner claimed").

Applicants assert that the cited references fail to teach or suggest the claimed invention and provide no apparent reason to combine the references cited by the Examiner to arrive at the claimed invention. The instant claims as amended herein are

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directed to a system comprising a solid surface, wherein the surface is attached to a connecting entity comprising a biotinylated first ligand entity coated onto the surface and a second ligand comprising avidin, streptavidin or streptactin bound to the first ligand entity via the biotin, and a biotinylated chimeric MHC class I α -chain monomer comprising a human MHC class I domain and a murine MHC class I domain, wherein the chimeric monomer is bound via the biotin to the avidin, streptavidin, or streptactin, and *maintains* the ability to re-assemble into a MHC ternary complex with an MHC binding peptide and β 2 microglobulin. However, neither WO 01/90747 A2 nor the '363 patent discloses a connecting entity attached to a solid surface as described above, via which a MHC α chain monomer is immobilized to a solid support. Rather, these references teach the formation of a multimeric MHC/peptide/streptavidin complex in solution followed by the attachment of the multimeric MHC complex to a solid surface.

Alexander discloses a transgenic mouse expressing an MHC molecule containing a chimeric MHC α -chain monomer. The chimeric MHC class I monomer disclosed in Alexander encompasses the α 1 and α 2 domains of human HLA-A11 fused to the α 3, transmembrane, and cytoplasmic domains of the murine class I molecule H-2k^b. *See* Alexander at page 4754, second column, lines 1-3. The instant application, teaches a chimeric MHC class I monomer containing α 1 and α 2 domains of human HLA-A2 heavy chain and a murine α 3 domain of H-2k^b, which is attached to a connecting entity via biotin, the connecting entity being attached to a solid surface. *See* instant application at paragraph [0089] and Figure 9. Alexander does not disclose a chimeric MHC monomer immobilized to a solid surface.

In view of the foregoing, Applicants submit that the Examiner has failed to establish a *prima facie* case of obviousness for the instant application.

(a) Rejection over WO 01/90747 A2 in view of Alexander

The Examiner has rejected pending claims 68-78 and claims 80-85 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over WO 01/90747 A2 in view of Alexander.

The Examiner alleges that while "WO 01/90747 A2 does not teach wherein the MHC class I comprises a human MHC class I domain and a murine class I domain, nor that the MHC molecule bound to the solid support is comprised in a kit", "Alexander *et al* teach a chimeric MHC class I molecule comprising human HLA-A11 $\alpha 1\alpha 2$ domains with a murine H-2K^b $\alpha 3$ domain". Office Action at page 5. The Examiner notes that "[i]t would have been *prima facie* obvious to modify the solid support taught by WO 01/90747 A2 by substituting the transgenic class I construct taught by Alexander *et al* for the human class I construct taught by WO 01/90747 A2". *Id.* Applicants respectfully rebut the Examiner's assertion.

WO 01/90747 A2 does not disclose, suggest, or otherwise contemplate the system of claim 68 or the dependent claims thereof comprising a solid surface-bound connecting entity attached to a chimeric MHC class I monomer comprising a human MHC class I domain and a murine MHC class I domain, wherein the chimeric monomer maintains the ability to assemble into a ternary complex with an MHC binding peptide and $\beta 2$ microglobulin. WO 01/90747 A2 at most discloses a peptide/HLA-A2 complex, which can then be biotinylated for formation of multimeric complexes with streptavidin,

which complexes are subsequently directly attached to a solid surface. *See* WO 01/90747 A2 at page 147, lines 15-30 and page 148, lines 1-31.

The deficiencies of WO 01/90747 A2 are not cured by the disclosure in Alexander. Alexander discloses a transgenic mouse expressing a chimeric MHC molecule. However, Alexander does not teach a chimeric MHC α -chain monomer immobilized to a solid surface that maintains its ability to form a ternary complex.

In view of the foregoing, Applicants assert that it would not have been *prima facie* obvious for a person of skill in the art to combine the teachings of WO 01/90747 A2 with the MHC monomer of Alexander to arrive at the system claimed in the instant application.

Applicants further assert that the property of the claimed chimeric MHC α -chain monomer to be immobilized to a solid surface by attachment via biotin to a connecting entity, and to maintain its ability to bind an MHC-binding peptide to form an MHC/peptide complex after denaturation, provides an improvement over the existing art in terms of developing high-throughput assays to study MHC-peptide interactions.

Paragraphs [0094] and [0095] of the instant application disclose that "[i]f the MHC monomers attached to the solid support at the start of the assay procedure are in a reconstituted form, the MHC monomers are prepared for the assay by exposure to denaturing conditions as described herein . . . [a]fter denaturation, unbound MHC-binding peptides are washed away . . . the solid support with attached denatured MHC monomers or modified MHC monomers is incubated with a putative MHC-binding peptide under reconstituting conditions for a suitable period of time to allow for formation of complexes".

Paragraph [0087] of the instant application further teaches that ". . . the surface coated with the MHC monomer provided by the present invention can be dried and stored for use at a later time".

The use of a connecting entity attached to the solid surface to which the biotinylated monomer is attached provides a uniform orientation of the monomers on the solid surface for binding to peptides, wherein the strength of the biotin-avidin/streptavidin/streptactin binding allows the monomer to remain attached to the surface under denaturing conditions. In contrast, WO 01/90747 A2 teaches the direct coating of MHC/peptide multimeric complexes onto a solid surface, which as known in the art would result in the complexes being bound to the surface in a variety of orientations, so that the monomers would not have a uniform orientation on the solid surface. It would also not be expected that the multimers would remain attached to the solid surface under denaturing conditions.

Thus, the fact that the MHC monomer remains bound to the solid surface, and an MHC-binding peptide can be dissociated from the MHC monomer and/or replaced with a different peptide bound to the monomer by changing the conditions of the reaction, provides an *unexpected and surprising* outcome of the claimed invention. *See* instant application at paragraph [0036], lines 5-10. Further, this *unexpected result* allows for facilitated screening of multiple different MHC binding peptides, making the system suitable for use in a high throughput scanning assay and providing a better, more robust immunoassay format than was heretofore known. *See* instant application at paragraph [0078].

The Supreme Court provides that objective evidence relevant to the issue of obviousness must be evaluated. Such evidence or "secondary considerations" may include evidence of commercial success, long-felt but unsolved needs, failure of others, and *unexpected results*. See *Graham v. John Deere Co.* (383 U.S. 1, 148 U.S.P.Q. 459 (1966)).

Applicants maintain that without the disclosure of the instant application, a person of skill in the art could not have reconstructed the *unexpected* result of the present invention from the disclosures of WO 01/90747 A2 in combination with Alexander. Applicants also submit that the Examiner has not provided any basis for the skilled artisan to combine the methods of WO 01/90747 A2 and Alexander that would lead to the *unexpected result* of the present invention.

In view of the foregoing, Applicants respectfully request that the above rejection be withdrawn.

Pending claims 80-85 were also rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over WO 01/90747 A2 in view of Alexander.

The Examiner states "[w]ith regard to the limitation recited in instant claim 81, it is an expected property of the art molecule that it is able to incorporate an MHC-binding peptide in the instance of empty MHC complexes, i.e., the HLA complexes lacking a binding peptide in the peptide binding groove can acquire a peptide". Office Action at page 5. Applicants respectfully disagree. As discussed *supra*, the claimed invention is not obvious over the teachings of the cited references. Claim 81 recites an embodiment of the invention in which a peptide is bound to the monomer. Such a peptide can be stripped from the monomer under denaturing conditions and reconstituted by binding

to a different peptide. As discussed *supra*, this represents an *unexpected result* over the teachings of the cited references.

The Examiner further states that "[w]ith regard to the limitation recited in instant claim 82, it is an expected property of the art MHC molecule, particularly since it is bound to peptide and can be recognized by T cells specific for the appropriate MHC/peptide complex, that the MHC class I molecule is in the proper conformation to be bound by a monoclonal antibody that distinguishes between a class I molecule bound to an MHC binding peptide versus one that lacks such peptide". *Id.* Applicants respectfully disagree. However, as mentioned *supra*, Applicants have amended claim 82 rendering the Examiner's rejection moot.

Thus, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner withdraw these rejections.

The Examiner further states "[i]t would have been prima facie obvious to have included the MHC bound to the solid support taught by the combination of WO 01/90747 A2 and Alexander et al in a kit . . . [o]ne of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention would have been motivated to do this because WO 01/90747 A2 teaches placing the MHC class I, molecule in a kit for convenience". Office Action at page 5. Applicants respectfully disagree.

As discussed *supra*, it would not have been possible for a person of skill in the art to reconstitute the present invention from the disclosures of WO 01/90747 A2 and Alexander. In view of this fact, Applicants assert that a person of skill in the art would not have looked at disparate portions of WO 01/90747 A2 to reconstruct the instant invention. Nor does the Examiner provide any logical reason or explanation as to what

would motivate a skilled artisan, at the time of the invention, to do so. Applicants submit that the Examiner's reasoning constitutes improper hindsight analysis. Numerous courts have warned against the use of hindsight analysis in an obviousness analysis:

[D]ecomposing an invention into its constituent elements, finding each element in the prior art, and then claiming that it is easy to reassemble these elements into the invention, is a forbidden ex post analysis.

In re Mahurkar Patent Litigation, 831 F. Supp. 1354, 1359, 28 U.S.P.Q.2D (BNA) 1801, 1805 (N.D. Ill. 1993)

[I]t is impermissible to use the claimed invention as an instruction manual or "template" to piece together the teachings of the prior art so that the claimed invention is rendered obvious.

In re Fritch, 972 F.2d. 1260, 1265, 23 U.S.P.Q.2D (BNA) 1780, 1783 (Fed. Cir. 1992)

In view of the above, withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

The Examiner states "[i]t would have been prima facie obvious to have provided the MHC bound to a solid support in a dried form. One of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention would have been motivated to do this for convenience of handling and storage". Office Action at page 6. Applicants respectfully disagree.

As discussed *supra*, the claimed invention is not obvious over the cited references, and so providing the kit in a dried form would accordingly not be obvious over the cited references. Thus, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner withdraw this rejection.

The Examiner also rejected claim 84 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over WO 01/90747 A2 in view of Alexander. Office action at page 4. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection. As discussed *supra*, the combined teachings of WO 01/90747 A2 and Alexander do not disclose the instant invention. As such, Applicants maintain that a person of skill in the art would not have reconstructed

the present invention from the disclosures of WO 01/90747 A2 and Alexander. Therefore, withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

(b) Rejection over the '363 patent in view of Alexander

The Examiner rejected claims 68-77 and claims 80-84 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over the '363 patent in view of Alexander.

The Examiner asserted that "[i]t would have been prima facie obvious to modify the solid support taught by US 5,635,363 by substituting the transgenic class I construct taught by Alexander *et al* for the human class I construct taught by WO 01/90747 A2". Office Action at page 6. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

The '363 patent does not disclose, suggest, or otherwise contemplate the system in claim 68 or the dependent claims thereof comprising a solid surface-bound connecting entity attached to a solid surface, comprising a biotinylated first ligand entity coated onto the solid surface and bound via biotin to a second ligand comprising avidin, streptavidin, or streptactin, to which is bound a biotinylated chimeric MHC class I monomer comprising a human MHC class I domain and a murine MHC class I domain, wherein the chimeric monomer maintains the ability to reassemble into a ternary complex with an MHC binding peptide and $\beta 2$ microglobulin. The '363 patent discloses expression of the individual recombinant subunits of the MHC molecule and association of the individual recombinant subunits to form an MHC/peptide complex *in solution*. See the '363 patent at col. 4, lines 21-29. The '363 patent further discloses the subsequent attachment of the *properly folded* MHC/peptide molecule to a solid surface. See the '363 patent at col. 6, lines 34-59.

The deficiencies of the '363 patent are not cured by the disclosure in Alexander, since Alexander simply discloses a method to create a transgenic mouse expressing a chimeric MHC molecule. Alexander does not specifically teach a chimeric MHC α chain monomer immobilized to a solid surface which maintains the ability to assemble into a ternary complex.

In view of the foregoing, Applicants assert that it would not have been *prima facie* obvious for a person of skill in the art to combine the system of the '363 patent with the MHC monomer of Alexander to arrive at the system claimed in the instant application.

Applicants further assert that the property of the claimed chimeric MHC α -chain monomer to be immobilized to a solid surface by attachment via biotin to a connecting entity, and to maintain its ability to bind an MHC-binding peptide to form an MHC/peptide complex after denaturation, provides an improvement over the existing art in terms of developing high-throughput assays to study MHC-peptide interactions.

Paragraphs [0094] and [0095] of the instant application disclose that "[i]f the MHC monomers attached to the solid support at the start of the assay procedure are in a reconstituted form, the MHC monomers are prepared for the assay by exposure to denaturing conditions as described herein . . . [a]fter denaturation, unbound MHC-binding peptides are washed away. For the assay, the solid support with attached denatured MHC monomers or modified MHC monomers is incubated with a putative MHC-binding peptide under reconstituting conditions for a suitable period of time to allow for formation of complexes".

Paragraph [0087] of the instant application further teaches that ". . . the surface coated with the MHC monomer provided by the present invention can be dried and stored for use at a later time".

Applicants assert that the fact that the MHC α -chain monomer remains bound to the solid surface, and an MHC-binding peptide can be dissociated from the MHC monomer and/or replaced with a different peptide bound to the monomer by changing the conditions of the reaction, provides an *unexpected and surprising* outcome of the claimed invention. *See* instant application at paragraph [0036], lines 5-10. Further, this *unexpected result* allows for facilitated screening of multiple different MHC binding peptides, making the system suitable for use in a high throughput scanning assay and providing a better, more robust immunoassay format than was heretofore known. *See* instant application at paragraph [0078].

The Supreme Court provides that objective evidence relevant to the issue of obviousness must be evaluated. Such evidence or "secondary considerations" may include evidence of commercial success, long-felt but unsolved needs, failure of others, and *unexpected results*. *See Graham v. John Deere Co.* (383 U.S. 1, 148 U.S.P.Q. 459 (1966)).

Applicants maintain that without the disclosure of the instant application, a person of skill in the art could not have reconstructed the *unexpected result* of the present invention from the disclosures of the '363 patent in combination with Alexander. Applicants also submit that the Examiner has not provided any basis for the skilled artisan to combine the methods of the '363 patent and Alexander that would lead to the *unexpected result* of the present invention.

In view of the foregoing, Applicants respectfully request that the above rejection be withdrawn.

The Examiner also rejected claims 80-84 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over the '363 patent in view of Alexander. Applicants respectfully traverse the rejections, for the same reasons as discussed *supra*. Furthermore, Applicants have amended claim 82, rendering the rejection moot.

The Examiner states "[i]t would have been prima facie obvious to have provided the MHC bound to a solid support in a dried form. One of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention would have been motivated to do this for convenience of handling and storage". Office Action at page 7. Applicants respectfully disagree for the same reasons as discussed *supra*.

Thus, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner withdraw this rejection.

The Examiner also rejected claim 84 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over the '363 patent in view of Alexander. Office action at page 6. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection. As discussed *supra*, the combined teachings of the '363 patent and Alexander do not disclose the instant invention. As such, Applicants maintain that a person of skill in the art would not have reconstructed the present invention from the disclosures of the '363 patent and Alexander. Therefore, withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

(c) Rejection over the '363 patent in view of Alexander, and further in view of the '479 patent

The Examiner has rejected pending claims 78, 79 and 85 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over the '363 patent in view of Alexander as applied to claims 68-77 and 80-84 and further in view of the '479 patent.

The Examiner states that "US 4,208,479 discloses the reagents for performing assays may be provided in dry form . . . US 4,208,479 further discloses that in performing assays, it is a matter of substantial convenience to provide the reagents in a kit . . .". Office Action at page 7.

The Examiner contends that "[i]t would have been prima facie obvious to have included the MHC molecule bound to the solid support taught by the combination of US 5,635,363 and Alexander *et al* in a kit . . .". Office Action at page 8.

The Examiner also states that "[i]t would also have been prima facie obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have provided the system taught by the combined references in dried form". *Id.*

The Examiner further states that "[c]laim 79 is included in this rejection because HLA-B*0702 is a subtype of the HLA-B7 class I molecule taught by Alexander *et al.* *Id.* Applicants respectfully disagree.

As discussed *supra*, the combined disclosures of the '363 patent and Alexander do not reconstruct the claimed invention. In view of this fact, Applicants contend that a person skilled in the art would not have looked to further combine the '479 patent with the '363 patent and Alexander in order to arrive at the claimed invention. Furthermore, Applicants assert that a person of skill in the art would not have looked at disparate

portions of the '363 patent, the '479 patent and Alexander to reconstruct the instant invention. The Examiner also does not provide any logical reason or explanation as to what would motivate a skilled artisan, at the time of the invention, to do so. Applicants submit that the Examiner's reasoning constitutes improper hindsight analysis. Therefore, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103 be reconsidered and withdrawn.

Conclusion

All of the stated grounds of objections and rejections have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot. Applicants therefore respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider all presently outstanding objections and rejections and that they be withdrawn. Applicants believe that a full and complete reply has been made to the outstanding Office Action and, as such, the present application is in condition for allowance. If the Examiner believes, for any reason, that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the number provided.

Prompt and favorable consideration of this Amendment and Reply is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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